

## **Erbe gets 300th, Saints advance in regionals**

Written by Jake Koolbeck

Saturday, 09 July 2011 23:54 - Last Updated Sunday, 10 July 2011 02:12

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The Xavier softball team's 9-6 win over Prairie Saturday night was a milestone for its coach, but more importantly, a step forward for the Saints.

Xavier Coach Brian Erbe got his 300th career win in the regional quarterfinal game. Erbe is 300-131 in nine seasons at the Xavier helm. The win moved the Saints into the semifinal round of their region.

"It is much more special to advance (in the region)," Erbe said. "I remember the first one, and some good ones in between. The win is no more special than any other."

The Saints (29-12) travel to Iowa City West to take on the Women of Troy (31-9) Monday night.

"They are a good team, I am looking forward to playing them," senior Tyler Sampson said of West. "It should be a good competitive game; it will be fun to play."

"They are extremely talented," Erbe said of the Women of Troy. "We will have to play our best softball of the season."

The Saints came in looking like a clear favorite against Prairie after sweeping the Hawks on Tuesday, 10-0 and 12-0, in Mississippi Valley Conference play. However, this was regional play and with the season on the line the Hawks showed up to battle.

"I knew that tonight would be much different than Tuesday," Erbe said. "Tuesday was just conference games. Everything was on the line tonight. I feel very fortunate to get the win."

Although the game was hosted by Xavier the Saints lost the flip and were the visitors.

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The Saints struck right away in the first inning. Three walks and an error gave them a 1-0 lead and left the bases loaded for freshman Emily Walton, who delivered a two RBI double to put Xavier on top 3-0 against the Hawks and senior starter Mackenzie Blaha.

“Without a doubt I thought she (Blaha, who hasn’t pitched much this season due to injury) gave us the best chance to win,” Prairie Coach Kimi Hynek said. “She brings a lot to the team and she threw well as long as she could.”

Prairie came back in the bottom of the second when Blaha doubled and sophomore Alyson O’Brian singled to set the stage for senior Katie Carver’s three-run home run that tied the game at 3-3 after two innings.

“It was a 3-2 count, so I knew a good pitch was coming,” Carver said. “I got it on the sweet spot.”

Xavier reclaimed the lead in the fourth inning on a squeeze bunt laid down by senior Kristen Winter to score fellow senior Abby Bedard, who walked to start the frame. Walton scored Sampson with a sacrifice fly that gave the Saints a 5-3 lead.

After three walks in the fifth, the Saints tacked on two more when Sampson doubled. That hit ended the night for Blaha and scored the Saints' sixth and seventh runs, which turned out to be enough for the Saints and their sophomore starter Jacey Wiebold, who gave up all six Hawk runs.

“Blaha threw very well. I got thrown inside and she had a good change up and rise ball.” Sampson said. “I stepped off the plate a little to get around on them (inside pitch). It worked out.”

“Jacey was not sharp tonight, she knows it. I give her credit for toughing it out,” Erbe who had eighth grader Erin Drahozal warming up. “I never gave serious thought to making a change. I knew Jacey would step up.”

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Sophomore Katie Kuch replaced Blaha in the circle and gave up two more in the sixth. Kuch added some much needed offense for the Hawks in the fifth and sixth. She homered in the fifth and had a two RBI single in the sixth.

Prairie continued to fight. The Hawks got the tying run to the plate in the seventh inning with runners on second and third. Wiebold got Sam Frederick to ground out to end the game and keep Carver from coming to the plate as the possible go-ahead run.

"I was hoping I could get up again, I would love to have had that chance," Carver said. "It just didn't end our way."

The Hawks end their season 13-25 and lose a strong class of seniors.

"We enjoyed have them for the whole time they were with us," Hynek said. "It will be very tough to replace them girls will have big shoes to fill (next year)."

### XAVIER (9)

Abby Bedard, 3B, 2 3 0 0, Courtney Colston, RF, 4 1 0 0, Tyler Sampson, SS, 4 2 3 2, Kristen Winter, 2B, 3 0 1 1, Audrey Richards, pr, 0 0 0 0, Emily Walton, DP, 4 0 1 3, Jenna Schulte, 1B, 4 1 1 0, Kelsey Kuba-Tresnak, CF, 4 1 0 0, Erica Miller, C, 3 0 1 0, Allison Schwach, cr, 0 1 0 0, Sydney Galligan, LF, 4 0 1 0, Jacey Wiebold, P, 0 0 0 0. Totals 30 9 8 6.

### PRAIRIE (6)

Shelby Crist, C, 4 0 0 0, Taylor Stecklein, 2B, 4 0 0 0, Kaitlyn Wieland, SS, 4 0 1 0, Mackenzine Blaha, P, 3 0 1 0, Remy Mumaw, cr, 0 1 0 0, Alyson O'Brian, DP, 4 1 3 0, Samantha Frederick, 1B, 3 0 0 0, Katie Carver, CF, 2 2 1 3, Brittney Lash, RF, 2 1 1 0, Chloe Lueck, LF, 1 0 0 0, Katie Kuch, P, 2 1 2 3, Amanda Stecklein, 3B, 0 0 0 0. Totals 29 6 9 6.

Xavier 300 222 0 - 9 8 1

Prairie 030 012 0 - 6 9 4

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Wiebold and Miller. Blaha, Kuch (5) and Crist. W – Wiebold. L – Blaha. 2B – Sampson, Walton, Blaha. HR – Carver, Kuch.